MEMORANDUM\*\*

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

ACTION

27274

April 13, 1971



MEMORANDUM FOR DR. KISSINGER

FROM:

Harold H. Saunders 740

SUBJECT:

Tunisian Military Assistance

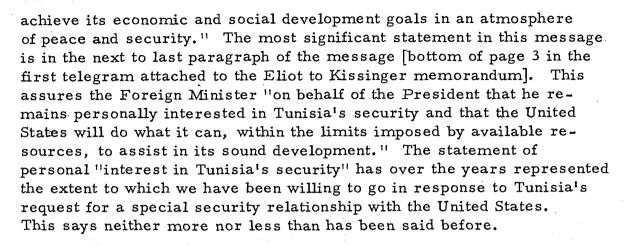
You may recall that when the President saw former Tunisian Foreign Minister Bourguiba, Jr. in New York at the UN in September 1969, he assured him that the U.S. would do what it reasonably could to help meet Tunisia's defense needs.

Doing this has been a continuing struggle because of the low overall ceiling imposed in the Foreign Assistance Act on military assistance to Africa and the need to recognize that Tunisia's economy will not support a large defense establishment. Therefore, our programmers have had to work at levels well below what the military planners might design even as a minimal defense force for Tunisia.

At present, the military assistance programmers are working within the concept of a \$45 million package over 5 years -- this representing not the amount of money we can provide but the value of the equipment that Tunisia might try to procure from all sources.

In the attached memorandum and telegram, State and Defense seek clearance on a telegram informing the Tunisians that we have been able to add \$1 million to the present \$3 million program for FY1971. Within that ceiling, the Tunisians would make their own choices between items earlier programmed and new items available, including some M-48 tanks, medium helicopters, mortars and anti-aircraft artillery.

The particular reason for seeking White House clearance on the attached package is that Secretary Rogers, in order to make the most of this modest increase, has decided to send a personal message to Foreign Minister Masmoudi. In that message he would recall the President's earlier expression of "full sympathy with Tunisia's sustained efforts to



Recommendation: That you clear the attached telegram with its references to the President's concern for Tunisian security and development.

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